

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 10203

THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM WAS SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO MADRAS
AND BOMBAY AND IS REPEATED TO YOU.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 1137

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT IN
SUBJECT: BIHAR JANATA AND DESAI/CHARAN SINGH
CRISIS: PATNA TRIP READOUT.

REF: NEW DELHI 10126

1. THE BIHAR JANATA PARTY IS, AT THIS TIME, PREPARED TO SUPPORT MORARJI DESAI IN THE AFTERMATH OF HIS DECISION TO OUST CHARAN SINGH AND RAJ NARAIN FROM HIS CABINET. THIS WAS THE CLEAR IMPRESSION GAINED BY CONGEN OFFICER IN TWO DAYS OF TALKS IN PATNA (JUNE 28 TO 30) WITH POLITICIANS AND NEWSPAPER REPORTERS. KARPOORI THAKUR, DESPITE HIS BLD ANTECEDENTS, IS SAID TO HAVE ACCEPTED THE ADVICE OF THE JANA SANGH FACTION OF HIS RULING STATE PARTY TO REFRAIN FROM ANY ANTI-MORARJI COMMENTS OR ACTIONS. MOREOVER, THE CHIEF MINISTER AND HIS NUMBER ONE ADVISER AND CONFIDANT, M.P. PRONAB K. CHATTERJEE, FLEW TO NEW DELHI ON JUNE 30 TO ENGAGE
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IN DISUCSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER REGARDING THE BIHAR JANATA'S FUTURE ROLE IN THE CHANGING POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS OF THE NATIONAL JANATA PARTY. ON THE MORNING OF JUNE 30, PRONAB CHATTERJEE TOLD US THAT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE BIHAR JANATA HAD BEEN CALLED AT THE INSTIGATION OF THE JANA SANGH FACTION TO PLAN THE PARTY'S STRATEGY IN THE WAKE OF THE HECTIC

EVENTS LEADING THE CHARAN SINGH'S OUSTER. THE JANA SANGH, WHICH HOLDS A PLURALITY OF THE JANATA SEATS IN THE BIHAR ASSEMBLY STRONGLY SUPPORTS KARPOORI THAKUR, WHO HAS LITTLE TO GAIN AND POSSIBLY MUCH TO LOSE (PERHAPS A MINISTRY IN NEW DELHI?) BY THROWING HIS SUPPORT BEHIND CHARAN SINGH. EVEN THOUGH THAKUR MAY PERSONALLY BE AGAINST THE PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION TO OUST CHARAN SINGH FROM THE CABINET HE WILL NOT, WE WERE TOLD, MAKE THIS FEELING PUBLIC. THROUGHOUT THE PUBLIC FIGHTING THAT LED UP TO THE NATIONAL JANATA'S JUNE 29 CABINET DECISION, THAKUR ISSUED ONLY ONE MILD STATEMENT, REPORTEDLY IN DEFERENCE TO CHATTERJEE, TO THE EFFECT THAT NO SINGLE INDIVIDUAL (I.E. RAJ NARAIN) SHOULD BE SINGLED OUT. THAKUR'S STRENGTH WITHIN HIS PARTY HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED RECENTLY WHEN HIS OFFER TO SEEK A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE STATE JANATA PARTY BOARD DISARMED HIS MOST VOCAL CRITICS WHO HAVE NOW CEASED THEIR AGITATION. EVEN SATENDRA NARAIN SINHA, THE MAN THAKUR BEAT OUT FOR THE CHIEF MINISTERSHIP HAS FINALLY ACCEPTED THAT THAKUR'S POSITION IS SECURE AND SINHA REPORTEDLY NOW IS AIMING AT A POST IN NEW DELHI.

2. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO MORARAJI'S FINAL DECISION TO OUST THE TWO MINISTERS
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SOURCES CLOSE TO KARPOORI THAKUR WERE SAYING THAT THE WHOLE CRISIS WOULD PROBABLY FIZZLE OUT IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS WITH ALL THE PROTAGONISTS IN THEIR SAME POSITIONS. IT WAS HOPED THAT J.P. NARAYAN WOULD BE ABLE TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION IN HIS SERIES OF MEETINGS IN PATNA WITH VAJPAYEE, FERNANDES AND THEN RAH NARAIN. EVEN AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, POLITICAL INSIDERS WERE PREDICTING THAT KARPOORI THAKUR WOULD NOT SUPPORT CHARAN SINGH IN THE EVENT OF THE LATTER'S OUSTER FROM THE CABINET. REGARDING J.P.'S HEALTH, WE WERE TOLD HE IS OFTEN TOO EXHAUSTED TO SLEEP. ON DAYS FOLLOWING A GOOD NIGHT'S REST, HOWEVER, HE IS REPORTEDLY QUITE ALERT AND HIS MEMORY IS SHARP. HE WAS APPARENTLY ALERT AND RESTED DURING HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UNION MINISTER WHO DESCENDED ON HIS PATNA HOME ON JUNE 28 AND 29.

3. FUTHER MATERIAL FROM BIHAR TRIP FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.
LYDON
UNQUOTE
GOHEEN

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